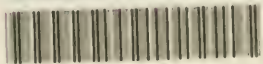


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THE AGE OF CONCENTRATION:

AN ADDRESS

Delivered at Convocation, Fall Term

OF

Simpson College,

INDIANOLA, IOWA,

Wednesday, September 11, 1907,

BY

GEORGE F. PARKER,

*(Secretary to the Equitable Trustees; lately
United States Consul in Birmingham; etc.)*



Printed for Private Circulation,

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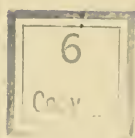
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THE AGE OF CONCENTRATION.

I.

“An old custom existed in Babylon of carrying the sick into the public square and there exposing them to the gaze of passers-by. The latter drew near, asked the symptoms, the means used to decrease the malady. If they have had or still have anyone amongst all their relations suffering from the same ailment, they describe the remedies that have cured them.” — *Maspero's "Egypt and Assyria."*

The American people, whose ancestors and forerunners fondly believed that their institutions were immune to the diseases which had killed off their predecessors upon the human scene, are now following this grim custom of half a hundred centuries ago. They may be seen carrying their afflicted into the market-places of nations and of history, in the fond hope of obtaining a diagnosis of ills and suggestions of remedy. We no longer live in Utopia or Arcadia, while the Ship, Human Perfection, once thought to be mirrored on the mirages of the Future, has not, even yet, found anchorage in our harbors. Questions are raised, doubts are hinted, maladies have developed, while remedies, more numerous than those known to the Babylonians, are proposed.

I shall venture to deal with the question,—old when the most ancient of civilizations was new—viz: the concentration into few hands, groups, or systems, of the power inherent in numbers. This is the more necessary because since the later years of the Fifteenth Century, the centrifugal forces of society have left largely to individuals, churches, parties, governments, large or small, and local bodies, whether official or voluntary, the conduct of their own affairs.

Among the contributing elements have been the changes in religion, including the rise of the laymen and the diminution of ecclesiastical power; general acceptance of the Christian doctrine on industry; the softening of the feudal discipline, once wholesome and necessary; the tendency to equality in war, promoted by the evolution of explosives and firearms; the diffusion of the taxing power among diverse authorities; and the rewards of individual or associated effort and adventure made possible by the discovery of new regions, as well as by development of old ones. To these must be added that enforced seclusion—almost monastic in its completeness—which, in the process of settlement, has been the lot of the pioneer.

II.

When Europe had been conquered to Western Civilization, the flow of population into new lands was accompanied by an aroused sense of responsibility which made it no longer a light matter either to develop old communities or to found new ones. Limiting the inquiry to our country, few of the present day, when the mechanical tends to dominate the intellectual or disputes mastery with it, realize the independence, the confidence, or the struggle incident to settlement and conquest. So much emphasis has been laid upon the intolerance and narrowness, early

transplanted, that the later development, which better illustrates the triumph of originality and leadership, and has assured the dominance, over a long period, of the distributive influences, is overlooked or its importance minimized.

Starting at two widely sundered points on the Atlantic Coast—neither attractive in itself—a strong, adventurous population slowly made its way, step by step, homestead by homestead, township by township, county by county, State by State. It was as restless and as regular as the tides. Now under one jurisdiction, then another, it carried always the customs, manners, industry, religion, traditions and laws of a conquering race. From the beginning, it was essentially English and has so remained. Continually outside the limits of any authority effective to help or to hinder, it provided for the Church and the school, for social and civic order. It was never out of a state of war—war of extermination waged with a race; war with nature in her most unrelenting moods; war with political systems in which the small abuses were very real to the imagination; and economic war from which, in a progressive society, there can be no escape.

Overcoming these unfriendly conditions, comfort and wealth followed effort, toleration succeeded bigotry, opportunity was wrested from weakening assertions of equality, and power came in spite of pretension. In like manner, ability and character, overcoming their enemy, mediocrity, brought recognition to real leadership. When each man knew or found his place he must keep or better it. If he failed, he must take the consequences. "He that will not work neither shall he eat" was the law, rigorously enforced, so far as possible among a people, ready to respond to a cry of real need. It was not deemed necessary, however, to go out into the highways and by-

ways in order to compel the idle or the useless to come in and be tucked away into refuges or schools. The idea that they could be made useful to humanity without ambition or effort of their own had not then become tenable.

III.

Character developed individuality in industry. An almost infinite variety of skill was evoked from demand or ripened with opportunity. The prairie, forest, stream, lake and mine, all yielded their natural fruits. There was absent that specialization, now so dominant as an economic force, and ever present the helpfulness which makes that life the most perfect experiment in co-operation ever tried.

Diverse in origin and character, the resulting society was so delicately adjusted that each laborer, farmer, carpenter, wheelwright, miller, smith, teacher, clergyman, physician, lawyer, or even moneylender, found his place. If there was scarcity in some product, the ingenuity of many filled the gap. If too many were engaged in an occupation, some one moved on. There was no place for what is now known in the scheme of life as unemployment and if this term had been known, it would have applied only to the defective and the lazy, the vagrant and the criminal.

Thus, from the beginning, each neighborhood developed, first, the skilled callings necessary to insure independence, then, those related to special or favored resources. Whether in metals, textiles, machinery, fisheries, products of the forest or mine, foreign shipping, internal transportation by vehicle or by vessel from coast port to port, or through navigable rivers, the development was slow, local in inception and management—an example

of community enterprise. But, as the work was carried on under strong individual direction, the leader was always in evidence.

In industry, as in the parallel social and political life, associated effort was as universal as it was necessary. That a venture was small in nowise changed its character. If an industry did not fit into the surrounding conditions, the laws of competition forced it to move on into a more friendly environment and put something else into its place, as from the earliest days of history. No appeal could be made for artificial aid: there was no almoner. Besides, the sense of fairness and the quality of self-reliance were too strong to suggest this at a time when manual skill and gradual growth were the most striking qualities; so it was left for the succeeding age of machinery.

When it was necessary to link up townships, counties and States, the same forces came into play. If a canal was to be dug, the labor and capital of many individuals, the credit of a succession of local bodies, and the influence of many leaders, were necessary before it could be undertaken. In this way, too, our railroads were begun and then extended, mile by mile, over the prairies and through forest, swamp and wilderness. If these facilities were to be procured, the people interested must take the initiative. All rights and franchises were conferred by the States, under the operation of principles and laws older than our government. Aid was voted in counties and townships, while donations of land or money came as free gifts from individuals or municipalities. Thus light and knowledge were admitted against the time when the central government needed help. They did not invite or permit Federal interference, seek to hamper development, or fashion manacles for the owners of capital or the representatives of great interests. This strange tendency did

not show itself until we came into a time when it is difficult to decide whether socialists, agitators or demagogues, in or out of office, are the most numerous or the most dangerous to society.

IV.

When it was desired to found an academy or college, the people of a district or State, generally those who held in common some form of faith, came together, gave what money they could, pledged their credit, furnished land or building materials or provided teachers, and lo! the work was done. It would now seem a small, to some perhaps, even a pitiful result.

The instruction was simple but wholesome, with a religious basis, and was imparted with a spirit worthy of both envy and emulation. It brought together earnest young men and women who, devoted to study for the sake of knowledge, went out into the world to meet bravely the demands upon them. It was not education only that they obtained: they passed on the torch of learning. In these days of exaggerated or sham athletics, and in requital for their services, we may, perhaps, overlook their failure to revive the glories of the Stadium or the brutalities of the Amphitheatre.

If we could look upon the architecture of the colleges and libraries of that time, and question their builders, we might extort Touchstone's confession: "An ill-favored thing, sir, but mine own." They were really interested in the men and women who were to be developed in the one, or to read the few books housed in the other. We do not know even their names but there was scarcely a community so small or remote, that it did not contain some man who laid the foundations of what we now enjoy or anticipate. If we are not heedless and unjust, we shall not forget the first step that both cost and counted.

Men, thus surrounded, strained every nerve, not to satiate the miser's greed, not to gratify any desire for vain show, but to promote the public good. That they were compelled to stand together in their own defence created a responsibility from which there was no escape. There was no hope of help from the outside, no central authority whose assistance might be invoked. If the aid of remoter neighbors was sought when weakness, or defence, or misfortune, made assistance necessary, an obligation was created which must be met. If the law needed assistance in order to catch a thief it must have it, not to arouse violence or encourage mob rule, but that an enemy of society might be punished.

V

It was inevitable that such a people—in their successive generations—should develop and perfect local government. Every community, from the Alleghenies westward, began life under the protecting aegis of the Federal Government, but the powers conferred were so purely permissive, that they were little more than licenses issued to adventurous men to exercise authority for themselves.

These simple laws were transmitted from one township, county or State, to others to the westward. Some small variation from a general type might occasionally be seen, some apparant novelty which, like the strange word that has survived—was certain to prove itself a revival of some old-time law, fallen into disuse. In general, the story of this silent progress was the old, old one which tells how habits, manners or customs have so found acceptance and challenged obedience as to earn the name, common law, so characteristic of a race.

Order, progress and protection to life and property demanded that there should be a courthouse and a jail.

Provision of a place for Divine worship, rude but free, and open to all creeds; employment of a teacher, perhaps himself little instructed; a bridge to be built even before county or township could be organized; the neighborhood road to connect with another leading on to the improvised market-place; association in interest of neighbor with neighbor, of community with community;—all these, following as the night the day, there appeared that new-old wonder: a State. It had not been made by social or political convulsion; it was rather a new island, slowly and painfully pushed up by the restless industry of humanity.

VI.

I have thus passed in review the lives of our ancestors and predecessors upon this large scene. It is not a fancy picture of an isolated community—a mythical gathering of prehistoric peoples. It is a plain story of beginnings, of growth and of real success, and the more deeply we study the times and conditions, the more clearly may we see that it is a people who make institutions: that institutions do not make or even seriously modify men. It is a record of high ideals some of which have justified themselves by success, more have failed, while others are subject to perils neither suspected nor foreseen by the founders.

It is the story of an infinite congeries of communities. In these days of universal Imperialism—the strange new word now admitted into the lexicon of democracy—they would no doubt be characterized as parochial. It has become the fashion to speak in depreciation of the parish, to belittle or ridicule this nursery of a race, to condemn it as narrow, rural or provincial. It is forgotten that every man, however great, is born in some parish; that he finds his early training in a parish which, however large, is still

a parish ; that he must live under the scrutiny, and subject himself to discipline from the rules and conventions of a parish. Most of his duties relate to a parish, where, whether he embraces or flouts opportunity, he works, marries, makes friends or enemies for himself, pays taxes, claims reward for good deeds, suffers for offense or crime, and asserts his right to protection or recognition. When he dies, even though he be the master poet of the world, his body may find burial in a parish cemetery, in a remote hamlet, while in that great Abbey in the Parish of Westminster, the center of the world's proudest capital, the pride and the devotion of a race may raise to him a fitting memorial.

VII.

But other times, other manners. Individual and local development, as opposed to concentration, could not continue forever ; of these contending forces, one now has sway, now the other. The pendulum swings as it has done throughout all history, and, in our case, the possibility, even the necessity, for concentration lay concealed in our society. If there was a Reformation, it brought a counter movement ; political revolution, so-called, was followed inevitably by reaction ; when individual development in industry had gone to a certain point, it must give way to the opposite tendency, made possible by machinery, itself a necessity for meeting the demands of men ; if governments were multiplied and powers distributed, it was inevitable that consolidation should again follow and that by conquest, annexation, partition of the weak among the strong, absorption, and the operation of centralizing forces, one government should swallow up another. These processes involved the loss or surrender of power in one place and its strengthening somewhere else.

This movement proceeded with varying fortunes until about the middle of the last century. It may be said fairly to have reached its culmination with the continental revolutionary fiascos of 1848; the collapse of the Chartist movement in England, conjoined, as it was, with the deceptive success of the so-called Free Trade Idea; and the foredoomed defeat of disruption in the United States. In a few years—less than the lifetime of a generation—revolutionary or republican movements in Hungary, Italy and Spain had come to grief; centralization of the Napoleonic type had established itself, regardless of name, in France; Germany had reverted, to all intents, to the medieval theory of Divine Right; Ireland was tied to England more firmly than ever; Japan had come into the world as an autoeracy of the true western type; the Balkan countries, hitherto the seat of small anarchies, had become nominally independent, but, in reality, had followed the example of Greece by falling under the suzerain power of Russia; Africa had been cut up into allotments and divided between the combined and consenting European powers, a fate with which China was threatened. Everywhere, concentration of areas, accretions to authority, and hardening of lines, were in evidence. The louder the demand for popular government and institutions, the more power was placed in the hands of rulers, all along the line. Whether with monarchs, either absolute or democratic, or Presidents, in republics of every class, the tendency to consolidation was neither lost sight of nor checked.

VIII.

In no country has this tendency been more marked than in our own. The work incident to settlement, the struggles with nature and man, the addition to our population of millions with no conception of our original ideals—

and final recognition that, after all, many of these ideals were only fancies—all were factors.

Our strong trend towards local initiative had come out of the conditions surrounding early settlement and from the tendencies of the time. One after another, colonies had been set up, which, bound only by the loosest ties, to a distant mother-land, became practically independent of outside control or of each other. As they expanded, their people, singularly homogeneous in origin and purpose, adapted themselves to their environment. Customs and manners deemed distinctive, had less of differentiation than they fondly thought, or than history assumes.

Whatever they had of authority was local. They knew little of a central power more than three thousand miles away and cared less. They seldom saw its agents, it never protected or sought to protect them from savage incursions, and practically exercised no authority other than that of taxation which, as we now know from sad experience, was mildness itself. Nor did these colonies know or care much more for their neighbors. Distances were long, commerce was rude, and travel was difficult, so that each community was practically an independent entity. Neither were the widely sundered settlements of each colony much interested in each other. If a band of Indians swept down upon one, the other was too far away to render assistance in such irregular or predatory warfare. So, in self-defense, they protected themselves from savage foes, set up their own crude courts and police for punishing home offenders, going their own way with contentment and happiness.

They were awakened from their dreams by a successful war with a great power, and that the Mother Country. They entered upon it, not with eagerness and enthusiasm, as we have been taught to believe, but with hesitation and

sorrow. They had no conception of personal discipline and less of intention of conferring authority upon anybody anywhere. Every man wanted to be his own captain, as well as to fill any other place in the raw frontier armies collected. It was only by the patience and devotion of the best disciplined soldier who ever commanded an army through a long war, that order finally came out of infinite chaos.

When the contest was over and the Confederation rope of sand gave way to the chain of "a more perfect union" under the Constitution, it became at once necessary to replace or strengthen the weak links. Although concentration had been skillfully concealed it was left organized. The powers conferred upon the executive, the legislature, and the judiciary, were so evenly balanced that each was fated to have its turn as a dominant element in the resulting centralization. The struggle between them was never violent or even open, but, whatever happened, authority acquired new strength. Power, hitherto absent, quiescent or local, was lodged in a new body or real vitality given to an old one. Henceforth, when it seemed necessary to do something, whether customary or unusual, whether nominated in the bond or not, a way was somehow found for doing it.

During the progress of their deliberations and while it was under discussion, the makers of the Constitution were in a constant state of fear lest the people of the thirteen colonies, still jealous and distrustful, should, in some way, discover that real power had been lodged somewhere. They had devised the most nicely-balanced set of equations open to human ingenuity. But force was there and the first man to find this out, and, while vowing he would ne'er consent, consented to use it, was Thomas Jefferson. Taking all the conditions into account, the purchase of

Louisiana was, perhaps, the boldest and most far-reaching single act of Imperialism ever exercised by an executive, whether despotic or popular. Apology has been made for it during more than a hundred years, but apology, excuse and fine spun argument have never succeeded in giving it any other than its true character: an assertion of pure power. It was personal, concealed until completed, supported by public sentiment at home, accepted by foreign countries, and has justified itself as both right and necessary.

And yet, in the irony of fate, the man who had the courage to exercise this authority—autocratic in itself and centralizing in effect—has been accounted the founder of the party which has always vaunted itself as popular! It is no less curious and instructive that, of the four really great and commanding executive acts in our history—the purchase of Louisiana, the crushing of Nullification, the Emancipation of the Slaves, and the despatch of Federal troops to Chicago in 1894—three were performed by men professing allegiance to the same party.

IX.

While the authority conferred upon the President of the United States by the Constitution, has been steadily enlarged by use, as well as by law and interpretation, it has also been the beneficiary of many incidental powers once absent or unforeseen. Cabinet officers, intended to be independent entities, have long been little more than chief clerks. It was always contended that the changes in the method of appointment to minor offices would weaken the authority of the President, when, in fact, they have strengthened him. He has been freed from the debasing influences which accompany favoritism and yet has retained, unchecked, the power of removal.

In addition, the President has had conferred upon him the powers incident to the extension of his duties. Of these, two may be cited. Under the Interstate Commerce Law and its amendments he may and does assert a control of transportation by land more drastic even than that always exercised in Federal waters. He has special license to fix the standard of purity for food carried in interstate commerce and offered for domestic sale, or he can interfere with foreign trade more effectually than any monarch or cabinet in the world. So great is his personal authority that, if he chose, he might condemn the decision of a court by an interview or a letter, indict by a hint, prosecute by an order, or imprison by a beck and a nod.

Nor is his new power limited to the execution of laws already enacted. At the insistent demand of one President, Congress repealed a vicious coinage law and that, too, without the support of a strong, much less a compelling, public sentiment. Another forced the enactment of a law—then deemed unnecessary and now known to be hurtful—for the regulation of railway rates and that, too, despite confessed ignorance of the immediate industrial effect. For another President, the Congress first disregarded and then overthrew the safeguards placed around the expenditures of public money after a struggle of nearly five hundred years, and put into his hands, without a single restriction, or even the slightest accounting, a war fund of fifty millions of dollars. A great canal, of commanding importance to the world's commerce, is now under construction, a thousand miles from our mainland, under practically the same conditions. The proved effect is that, at the word of command from a President, the Congress stands at "attention" ready to obey his orders by making additions to existing laws, common and statute. It does this whether they are good or bad, necessary or superfluous, dictated by honest

methods or merely an anticipation of demands supposed to be popular.

X.

The same conditions are found in the separate States. If a Governor with skill as a manager, has ambitions or interests, he may make a legislature his tool more effectually than if he were a Czar or a South American dictator. If he is honest and independent, he may use the same power for purposes which, to him and even to others, seem honest and right. The student will emphasize the existence and scope of this power rather than the use to which it is put. He will be prone to inquire whether our boasted system of checks and balances has not broken down, when one man, by the accident of place, can add legislative authority to that of the executive.

In addition to executive pressure, the legislature, both Federal and State, is prone to yield to popular demands and to pass laws and regulations known to be dangerous in principle and ruinous in practice. The conservative elements of society—which must both reign and govern, because in the end only they stop to think—take alarm and the executive is besought to intervene. That he may do this effectively he has had conferred upon him the veto, with which, to the relief, in most cases, of legislative leaders themselves, he is able to save them from their own fatuity. Power, thus invoked and used, is like saving a fool from his folly or a desperate man from suicide.

Probably no outward sign of the concentration of power is more important than that furnished by the control of legislative bodies. In the beginning, the rules of procedure were so simple that the manual, compiled by Jefferson for the Senate, was long the universal guide in every order of public meeting—as indeed it still is in a

modified form. It was plain, easy of understanding and interpretation, and fitted into the ideas behind our society.

As the flood of proposed laws increased in volume—while the need for them was sensibly diminished—another dyke was erected against popular control. Long before the adoption of certain drastic rules of the House of Representatives led the Speaker of the day to thank God that it was no longer a deliberative body, the methods of procedure had become complicated and difficult and now they are a maze. They are almost as obscure as if written in Choctaw, while the officers supposed to be the servants of these bodies have long since become their masters. In like manner, appointed by the Speaker, the legislative committee—no longer open and democratic, but based upon party position and length of service, and hampered by conditions foreign to our original conceptions—concentrates in itself a power which would never have been granted when individual initiative was still strong.

Thus, by encroachment from the executive and the operation of its own rules, the legislature has tended to become more and more impotent. In addition to these, recognizing, as if by instinct, its own weakness, it has surrendered a still larger share of its power. As Presidents and Governors could not do the necessary work efficiently, and Mayors could not be trusted with it, authority has gradually been lodged in commissions. The public oversight of Railroads, Canals, Insurance, Coal Mining, Fisheries, Forests, Reservations, Parks, Water, Gas and Electric Lighting, and Traction—in their present form mainly new developments—was given to special bodies. The legislature, while giving up something it really could not retain, thought that it would weaken the executive if direct control of these industries was given into other hands.

As a result, perhaps three-fourths of the relations which the people hold to corporations, municipal and business, are now in the hands of commissions and bureaus. In the majority of cases, the work is done by incompetent or inexperienced men and is, therefore, badly done. There is continual interference with that freedom of internal trade and commerce of which we have always boasted ourselves; there is the use of these bodies, for personal or party purposes; while the executive, instead of being weakened, has been strengthened, by exercise of the power of appointment and removal. But the most illuminating feature of these intervening bodies is that they have been fashioned for the avowed purpose of avoiding or averting popular control; a tendency which has commanded general acceptance. Their history illustrates the trend towards a central power, verging upon the absolute, retiring so-called democratic government further into the background and promoting the growth of that bureaucracy continually held up to reproach when dealing with the systems of other countries.

In nothing has concentration gone farther than in our courts. Taking a long step beyond England and the precedents inherited from her, they can and do make the legislature ridiculous and the executive impotent. This is the case, too, while they have no separate power even to execute their own writs. They go on fixing the law—with almost universal popular acceptance, whether it involves the conviction or acquittal of a criminal or the settlement of a great constitutional issue. If they decide that this or that is not permissible under the law—even when no statute can or ought to regulate it, as in the Northern Securities and other Corporation cases—some way out is generally found. Their decisions strengthen authority somewhere and, as its incidence is uncertain, they naturally attract opposition

from demagogues out of office—who see in them bars to the attainment of power, or from those in office who feel or fear the restraining hand.

XI.

Another ingredient in this tendency is catching the public ear. Time was when the holder of an office attracted attention only because he had something to say. Whether he was President, Governor, Senator, Judge or Constable, he had the hearing that his utterance warranted and no more. An office had little drawing power apart from its holder's ideas.

Now, he makes his appeal with the enlarged authority of his office. He may be a demagogue, with no higher message than the commonplaces of his class from Cleon downward; still, he may count upon a hearing or a cult, and command popularity and power. If these are imperilled or lost, the multitude will almost certainly be fed on husks by successors of the same stamp. When public interest or absence of effective leadership supervene, an agitator may also get a temporary hearing—coining discontent into dollars or using it for notoriety; his face may disfigure the fences or hoardings; or he may be nominated for high office, however little prospect he may have of election, thus supplementing the official or even competing with him. Both illustrate the tendency to focus attention upon those in public place—just as a King, or a reigning Duke, or a retired Prime Minister, may do.

They emphasize the fact, too, that we must reckon with the spirit, if not with the body, of destructiveness. They reveal men of long American ancestry, presumably educated and patriotic, yet standing ready to lead the ignorant or dissolute into excess, from no other desire than to serve their own ends. Have we not a right to condemn

the official or orator whose daily output of oratorical froth, bringing the coveted reward in notoriety, inflicts cruel and unusual punishments upon the society foolish enough to listen or to heed?

XII.

There is a fungous political growth known in the parlance of the day as bossism—something which no man, however wise or experienced, could explain to an intelligent foreigner. Its distribution is so wide and general, and its meaning so well understood by our people, that definition is unnecessary. Wherever found, the boss shuns direct responsibility. If he accepts office, it is a modest one. He cares nothing for the semblance of power—its reality is good enough for him. Salaries and allowances are little to his taste—he prefers to keep the toll-gates through which the tax-payer must pass. Education may have its uses for others—he will not need it, except to dis-train upon its revenues or to control its patronage.

So universal is this parasite, that, in some stage of development, it is found, in both parties, in every State, county and municipality, the country over. Nor does the boss plough a lonely furrow, as there are rivals always willing to take his place. He dominates local initiative, as his special quarry, but invites and welcomes other activities. He supports some candidate for President; degrades one tool from the Senate to substitute another more subservient; makes a Governor his puppet or, occasionally, in the absence of the right man, takes the place himself; so chooses sheriffs as to foment or suppress mob violence; controls legislatures, city councils, or county commissions; and stands before the doorways of utilities, railroads, or corporations needing favors and ready to pay for them. Once a jest, he has become an institution and a men-

ace; once weak and local, satisfied with petty tribute, the class is now all-pervading and united in a community of interest than which nothing can be stronger.

Behind this new force is the party machine with its infinite ramifications, from the hamlet or election district, through township, city, county and State, up to the all-comprehending national convention. Taken together, they constitute the most efficient instrument ever fashioned for enabling the few to rule the many. Over a series of years, in the whole country, certainly not more than one out of a hundred voters either attends a party caucus or convention or has any part in creating or curbing a power almost autocratic. In its proudest days, despotism in Rome or France never knew such a perfect device for promoting its aims and ends.

It is no part of my purpose to analyze this force. For seven hundred years the English race has been exaggerating political action, giving it a place far beyond its deserts or its relation to the aggregate of human effort. The effect has been so to circumscribe political power to two bodies, called parties, as to make its generation elsewhere difficult or impossible. Open to no rivalry, they appeal equally to the same interests and classes. Each represents, now, the best impulses, again the worst, generally a lofty indifference which makes them the prey of the designing and the selfish.

XIII.

To deal with combination in business is to touch the most absorbing question of the day. When the intervention of government and politicians is deemed the most vital matter in business there is little hope that its importance will be understood. Ordered industry may be defined as the barometer of human progress; but it is not necessary to treat the question anew, from the point of

view of economics : because of this there has already been so much, that the world is tired of it ; nor need we review its evolution and long history : the elements of these are well understood

We talk glibly of Trusts, without attempting a definition of the word: so none has been framed which describes the thing itself. When the use and control—not, of necessity, the ownership, of vast wealth—have passed into a few hands, we see the perfect working of concentration. We may not understand the logic of the movement, nor its effect upon inherited conditions. We know, nevertheless, that it is not the result of accident—the product of wild chance.

In order to comprehend its philosophy, we must go back to the time when hand labor and apprenticeship were universal ; when commerce was small and penetrated only into narrow areas ; when exchange and banking were, relatively, in their infancy ; when food and goods were produced and consumed almost wholly within the limits of each community ; when the standard of living, for all engaged in industrial occupations, was simple ; when masters and men were closely associated in person and interest ; and when transportation had scarcely passed beyond the stage of development reached by the Phoenecians. These conditions persisted, with little change, for twenty or thirty centuries of high civilization. During all this time, the simplest of machines sufficed for men's needs—being then no more than auxiliaries to the hand. But gradually mechanical devices were brought to such perfection that—although we still call the result manufactures—the machine has become vital and necessary with the hand as its helper,—often little more than its watcher.

When invention and discovery spread by leaps and bounds and the resulting devices were successfully

applied to human needs, three effects followed :—(1) they superseded the old-time master ; (2) they killed apprenticeship by making unnecessary the skilled worker ; and (3) they so increased and cheapened products as to multiply the demand.

On the master's side, the necessity for capital followed. This could only come from association. Gradually, the profits, spared and withdrawn from agriculture and commerce, were invested in machinery. As one development followed another, the power of money was changed, demand grew, and with it came supply. Competition made or found new markets for the products turned out by the machine. On the side of the workman, whose outlook upon the world was wholly changed, almost in the twinkling of an eye, it was accompanied by violence. This failed, as always, but labor again caught its breath, and organized trades unions, in defiance of the laws of conspiracy soon to become a dead letter.

With these developments, the centripetal forces in industry were fairly at work. The rest of the story is that of the boy's snowball. New continents and islands have been discovered, subdued and populated. New seas have been opened so that the ocean steamer disputes with the railroad the honor of being the last word in the evolution of the mechanical. The needs of the world could only be met by this use of co-operation in its perfect form—that of the corporation—because, only by means of it could capital command management and profit. From one corporation to many—competing with each other with the same machines, employing the same kind of labor, making the same products, seeking the same markets—it was only a short step to the small, tentative combination. Taking a still shorter step, and we had the corporation of corporations : the so-called Trust.

At each step an owner, unable to adjust himself to new conditions, was eliminated. Here a superintendent or engineer, there a foreman or workman, for whom the game was too large, or the pace too rapid, fell out of the ranks. During this time, progress had substituted the science of the precisian for the primitive rule of thumb, so that larger leadership became a recognized necessity. It then becomes easy to understand that in industry, as in a nation's army—expanding from company to battalion, from battalion to brigade, from brigade to corps,—officer after officer drops out, while soldiers or groups of them are replaced, one after another, because they can no longer fit into the new environment.

We have adjusted to these changes a new country, forced at short notice, to feed a great multitude pressing in to it from the outside, and an infinitely larger and increasing multitude—which no man can number—to whom, in the expanding markets of the world, it must send food and the raw material of clothing and shelter. Thus the necessity for combination became clear. Nor does the appearance of the great industrial commander have any longer the character of mystery. Bearing in mind these things it will be clear why he had to dispose his army to advantage, and the fact that he has done so is attested by a varied commerce, widely distributed, the extension of railroads, the growth of cities and a busy population,—but for him, non-existent, petty or simple.

This capacity for large affairs—first shown in our trade with both Europe and Asia—has not been confined either to its original seats, or to a few financial centres, old or new. There is scarcely a State or a considerable city which has not brought opportunity to men who have been able to conceive, organize, and conduct enterprises of pith and moment. Banks with a hundred score of corres-

pondents distributed over wide areas, are found a thousand miles from the seaboard ; single institutions, receiving and investing the savings of from fifty thousand to a hundred thousand depositors, are not uncommon ; life insurance companies, marvels of concentration and confidence, have grown up ; and building associations, encouraging and developing the home-owning instinct, are almost universal. All these—really great trusts in the proper sense of this word—testify to successful fruitage by the once feeble plant of co-operation. They reveal the possibilities inherent in vast material resources when controlled by natural leaders, who, informed by knowledge, are able thus to supplement the efforts of an industrious and enterprising people.

As the result of the changes arising out of this rapid and steady growth, never, in all the world's history, has so much talent, character, energy or honesty, been at the service of industry as during the past hundred years. Recognizing the necessity for supplying the pressing needs of the world, political ambitions—hitherto the most dominating and potential in moving men—have been put aside. Leaders of the highest ability and merit have thus left government weakened and given it over, in the main, to an order of men distinctly inferior. In like manner, the learned professions have been driven from their usual recruiting grounds, while literature no longer attracts the most powerful minds.

XIV.

It has been equally impossible to escape the influence of this tendency upon religious thought and activity. Those bodies which have always enforced discipline, have gone still farther in this direction. Whether in new lands or in old, the Roman Catholic Church—the greatest voluntary body known to history—has never surrendered or weakened its authority.

In like manner, the English Church, and its branches, always a great central body, looking back over long vistas of history, has kept itself fairly free from the dominating centrifugal forces and is now ready to enter upon its heritage.

The sects which have grown directly out of the work and teachings of Wesley, adopted a modified episcopal form of government, so that they have been in a position to adjust themselves, when the time came, to the changes in tendency and purpose.

The Congregationalists—lineal successors of those assertive individualists, the Independents—have associated themselves and tend to recur, often unconsciously, to the original rigidity and discipline of Presbyterianism. The Baptists, constitutionally lacking in discipline, would fain come together for a better common understanding. When these two great sects, like those more compactly organized or severely trained, are moved to take on corporate form and to institute heresy trials, the trend of their thought is plain.

The newer and smaller sects—some or them revivals of early tendencies or so-called heresies—and others, little more than personal offshoots from bodies themselves offshoots, either do not grow or tend to readjust themselves to the parent bodies, or return to a form of belief with history and tradition behind it. Each sect thus obeys, the impulse to create or strengthen authority.

Over all, are found aspirations for union; common activities along many lines; the practical disappearance of purely sectarian dogmas; the attractions of liturgy and an ordered service: the return, not avowed, but still general, to stained glass windows and Gothic architecture; the desire to conserve and use what science and knowledge have left to religion; the dominance of organization, rather

than of the man—all emphasizing authority. They show that to be effective as well as recognized, the leadership demanded by the times must come through concentration of effort, not its diffusion.

XV.

In education, we have given ourselves over to consolidation. Everywhere, between the encircling shores of the Atlantic and the Pacific, we have so persisted in this tendency that the same books are taught, by teachers trained in the same way, to the same kinds of pupils, to the destruction or hurt of originality. However widely sundered, our methods so fit into each other, that character in superintendent, teacher or pupil, has become next to impossible,—unless and until the rigidity of school education has been overcome in the struggle of actual life. When the State interfered to make conditions, then to supervise, and later to levy, or to dictate the amount of school taxes, the day of local initiative was over. The central graded township school was a natural and helpful step. Even the Federal Government has given money or lands, naturally followed by advice and a certain direction.

Taken together, we have been able to attain, over three million square miles of the earth's surface, that awful uniformity under which every child in a given grade, within the limits of each separate time zone, is reciting the same lesson at the same moment. This result so strikes the imagination that we are now attempting—let it be hoped vainly—to extend the same deadening monotony into those islands of the sea which illustrate the operation of concentric influences and add new weight to our burdens.

A college was once defined as a log with Mark Hopkins on one end and a student on the other. Now, we cannot

so much as project a small college of the old type. Thinking in terms of millions, we look about for their possessors only to make the resulting institution an imitation of the oldest and largest, or a glorified high school where, in accordance with Dr. Johnson's formula, every one finds something to eat but no one gets a full meal.

XVI.

Even in what is known as fashionable society, we see the influence of combination. It is already organized and its various parts are so attracted to each other that the time is, perhaps, not remote when the Four Hundreds of many cities will, like other federated bodies, hold national conventions for fixing rules to regulate admission and to frame constitutions and by-laws which shall have universal acceptance.

Among men, mental tedium or vacuity has produced many curious secret organizations—now taken seriously by vast numbers—than which nothing could better illustrate the dominating influence of association. Among women, an abnormal industrial ambition united with an exaggerated demand for rights and a resulting failure to recognize duties, drives them into societies of a dismal type. From this chaos, come noisy demands for participation in a suffrage already discredited; clubs, in which pretension triumphs over knowledge, while vanity displaces pride; and movements, social or political, which, labeled moral or philanthropic, invite danger by their disregard of experience and nature's limitations.

Instead of desire or ability to participate in games, the tendency seems to be for crowds to collect in order to see them—just as the Greeks had their spectacles, or the Caesars threw gladiators or Christians to the lions. The skill, personality, and fortunes of a few hired players

absorb the attention of millions who never see them or the games in which they appear.

Reports of murder trials of the lowest and most vulgar sort are spread broadcast throughout every part of a great country boasting itself of education and intelligence, in order that, at nightfall, the fifty millions of persons who have learned to read, may know them in all their loathsome and demoralizing details. A social scandal, involving a man of position, is repeated each week by twenty thousand newspapers until succeeded by another or viler sensation. To assert that this condition is due to the yellow newspaper is to confuse cause with effect. It comes from vicious tastes which demand satisfaction and it will continue until the hypnotic stage has passed.

XVII.

Nor can we overlook the congestion of population in cities. Whether its effects are good or bad, the process marks changes no less striking, in their way, than those already dealt with. In the main, this movement brings together a class—collected from the most squalid life known to Europe—never subjected to the peculiar discipline incident to cities. For the most part, they show little of spirit and less of ambition. Whether the ruling motive is dread of military service, hope of work, or escape from oppression and bad government, they seldom have even the slight industrial skill now demanded. They are massed in special quarters of their own—uniformly slums—and herded in tenements. From the beginning, their struggle is both sordid and pathetic. Now sweated and their votes sold at wholesale, again bound for a time to hard taskmasters, generally without personal independence, the despair of the really strong and unselfish men among their compatriots, they illustrate, at its weakest and most dangerous point, the tendency to combination.

The movement from country to town and from both to the city, emphasizes the same tendency in another form. The isolation of early days accorded with the qualities of a reliant and self-sufficient yeomanry who took their pleasures as sadly as did their ancestors centuries before. Diligent and confident in the conduct of their own business, help from lawyer or banker was not needed. As their prosperity grew, games and amusements became the necessary incidents of company and fellowship. New methods in education, new social conditions and rules, travel for business or pleasure, took them out of the rut, with the result that our county towns and scattered hamlets, small and meagre originally, have developed into centres and become far-off imitations of the capitol or the metropolis.

Their inhabitants no longer disdain assistance from the banker and the lawyer. Indeed, initiative or successful management on the lines fixed by the grandfathers or fathers, who laid the foundations of these comfortable fortunes, seldom lies within their power. Most of the really ambitious must push out into the great world. In no other country than ours, can there be found so many persons in whom a small competence, instead of arousing ambition and increasing efficiency, so promotes business timidity, destroys initiative, or lures to ruin. As they need a manager, the supply comes. In one farming county, within my own knowledge, a single lawyer, one of sixty, directs, like the manager of some large venture, the relations to debtors and creditors, collects old investments or make new ones, for a hundred families of this type.

As an illustration of concentration, this movement is scarcely less typical or striking than the making or management of the United States Steel Corporation. In the aggregate, it affects far larger amounts of capital as well as

more persons and transactions. The question may well be asked whether these classes, the dependents of the lawyer or the banker or both, ever think of themselves when they read, with horror, of the making of a new Trust or the workings of one already established !

XVIII.

I have thus glanced at some features of our national life at two periods. In the one, we see a people, as thoroughly assimilated as any in the world, united in ideals and spirit, in whom character stood out, without loss of the early day-dreams or acquisition of the latter-day aspirations to world power.

It was not then thought necessary to govern men—they were counted as little worth having unless fitted to govern themselves. One State was not prone to follow another into the wildest orgies of legislation—merely for the sake of making laws. Our demagogues were still confined within their own water-tight compartments, and, as their field was limited, their trade had not become one of skill and profit. Our original dialects had not been ironed into a uniformity reached only by the progressive degradation of our language. The possession of a distinct character was not looked upon as an eccentricity. If we had a great national figure there was some assurance that he had not been preferred mainly because his horizon was that of a county or a township. If we had small men, we measured them by our foot-rule not theirs. If it was necessary to get rid of the rats, however predatory or numerous, there was still an aversion to burning or sinking the ship. Best of all, if a problem presented itself, it was not merely talked about, but was solved, even if a long and desolating civil war became necessary.

It may be interesting, by way of contrast, to note some recent changes in our population. Since 1870, we have

admitted as immigrants, from the countries of Europe and North America, nearly twenty millions of people. With their descendants and survivors, this means that, out of seventy-five million whites, one-half have no American knowledge, ancestry or traditions older than the period of the Franco-Prussian war. And yet, physiologists tell us that, in our early days, when immigration was still fairly homogenous, it required at least a hundred years to make Europeans into Americans, that is, to assimilate their bodies to a strange air, new foods, new industrial conditions, and the various constituents that entered into account. How much time may be needed, with these new, strange elements, in order to adjust anew the focus of their minds, to give a broad, comprehensive patriotism, to impress our economic point of view, or to produce emulation of our pride and independence, has not been estimated by a friendly prying ethnologist.

We admit these people, however low in the scale, with the welcome due to humanity. They come to the unfamiliar boons of safety, regular industry and three meals a day. Although they have had no part in the making of the country, they are in the world, have rights, may be made useful to themselves and must be taught duties if the lesson lies within their power.

Dismissing from account the rare individual, these later additions are doomed, as a class and for an indefinite period, to be hewers of wood and drawers of water in industry, automatic danger signals in politics, and almost the despair of moral and religious effort. We must, therefore, concern ourselves with the awful impotence, the dangers inseparable from ignorant, undisciplined masses who must be ruled by the strong hand. We must deal with numbers to whom opportunity means nothing because they cannot embrace it—men who may idly indulge aspiration while

ambition waits vainly for them to knock at her doors.

Whether we wish it or not, in accepting these new peoples, we must adopt ideas and methods strange to our ancestors and predecessors. Unconsciously, our ideals have changed, not because we have rejected them, but for the vital reason that, with the materials at our disposal, we can no longer hope to realize them. In society, no more than in textiles, is it possible to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. Instead of a people, once homogenous, with likeness in origin, tastes and outlook, we see a population, quick indeed, mercurial even to the danger-point, impulsive rather than emotional, unsettled and confused in type, and in a state of transition—whether physical, mental, institutional, moral or religious.

XIX.

We have not developed this tendency because of aggression by any man, or class, or interest. The reason is far better and stronger; we have been driven to it, and so a different order of leadership must be sought, created and welcomed. Discipline must be invoked from a central authority—it can no longer be generated wholly within the local community, important as this must always remain. Whether or not we believe in it, whether we welcome it or reject it, the change of conditions makes it a necessity.

Nor can our needs be met by the rise of benevolent despots, those rare beings who assume or assert the possession of omniscience. Our new leaders may not be statesmen: the chances are that they will not be. The important problems will be economic. When the time comes, as Macaulay predicted, that one-half of the population of New York has had no breakfast and has no prospect of a dinner, our successors may not follow the example we are now inclined to set by refusing a welcome to the industrial or commercial master who can help in

time of need. It will then become clear why government has so suffered in character as to be relegated to a place of minor importance. In its pure state, socialism is an attractive theory, but the shadow on the dial of its future is cast by the assured contest for leadership, during which it would degenerate into wild anarchy.

Although bossism exhibits anew the spectacle of the blind leading the blind: it is not an accident. It reflects the need for leadership; it is an attempt to escape from that dullness inseparable from the commonplace. It is not encouraging to know that, in avoiding the boss, our people either run into the open arms of the demagogue, or those of the executive who may use his place to appeal to passion, to work injury to thrift and property, or to dictate his own successor. These are the remedies provided by the old choice between the frying-pan and the fire.

XX.

Nor is the coming leader pointed out by any known process. A few months before his death, the late Frederick Temple—a really great Archbishop of Canterbury—when discussing the English questions of the day, asked in his blunt way: “But, if you could call any living statesman to power, whom would you name?” Propounded anywhere in the world, this question would defy answer. As society must adjust itself to the methods necessary for creating and enforcing discipline, so we may assure ourselves of its accomplishment when the time comes. Weakness of initiative, so promoted by machinery, the encouragement of artificial methods for repressing leadership, and the success of popular crazes, would produce serious consequences.

It is doubtful, whether in the face of all efforts to promote training, education, industry and independence, a larger proportion of mature male persons is engaged in produc-

tive labor now, than a century ago. Estimate is next to impossible of the hordes who prey upon society, as its criminals, and vagabonds, while the weight of the burden it carries in the insane, defective, ne'er-do-well, lazy, idle pensioner or pauper, in the small rich, made un-ambitious or incompetent by pettiness of fortune, or in the larger rich, ruined by vice or luxury, is equally beyond computation.

May not even the entrance of women into industry, hailed as a good sign, be a grave portent as showing that men are no longer able and willing to do the world's heavy work? Its influence upon the future of the race cannot now be foreseen, but mankind may one day realize that, of all the foundation stones laid by Christianity and newly solidified in the age of chivalry, the one thus rejected was the chief.

While much has been done to adjust machinery to the needs of millions of human beings who are in the world as an effect of the increased production it has promoted, the work of combination has only begun. Its great triumphs are yet to come. If we are to escape the withering touch of government, we must recognize the necessity for this new-old force, manage it more efficiently, and complete its domination. It is still imperfectly organized, inordinately wasteful, and too often the victim of the financial quack. That it must assure a leadership at once intelligent and honest, stability in supply, reasonableness in prices and profits, continuous and effective competition in foreign markets, and more exacting standards for all engaged in it, are axioms. However organized, the business of a great people cannot long prosper, if, at every turn, it is to become the football of the ignorant, the pretender, the demagogue, or the disorganizer. If this danger is to be averted and progress is to continue, never did a more weighty responsibility rest upon men than that now cast upon our captains of industry.

Thus far in our history, large leadership has, of neces-

sity, been drawn mainly from the descendants of the English, Scotch, Scotch-Irish, Dutch and Germans—the five strains in our original population which have long been so thoroughly assimilated that no cleavage can be seen. However, their proportion to the total population is so small, it shows such a constant decline, and they are so weakened by many hurtful influences, that they can neither expect nor be expected to furnish hereafter original and directing power sufficient to meet the needs of many times their number.

The weight of the burden thrown upon the men of light and leading among our later foreign contingents, in so directing as to make them useful additions to our population, is seldom appreciated. The magnitude and value of the work thus undertaken and carried on with devotion, cheerfulness and singleness of purpose, have seldom been adequately recognized by its beneficiaries or our people, and not always asserted even by themselves. Having thus served their apprenticeship, they are fairly ready to take up the higher duties awaiting them. Never was there a field in which the need for honest and effective husbandmen was greater.

Sargon, king of Assyria, abandoned the capitals of his father and his ancestors, with their history, their tombs and their treasures, that he might found a new city which should belong to him only, where the past should begin with his reign. So it once was with us. Yet, it has now become apparent that we must accept the rules of life prepared for us by generations of predecessors. Having found, as Edmund Burke said of himself, that men must show their passports at every turn, so we may learn that the world was no more created by the latest man, who with his tiresome, old commonplaces, sets up as the inventor of a political theory, than by the woman who launches a new religion.

Confident and optimistic persons continually forget that human society is a great continuing limited liability company. The bonds are held firmly by sleeping partners, being the majority of the living, who, content with a small, certain return, have neither ability nor desire to conduct the business. The common stock is held by the men who, doing the work and bestirring themselves to increase the product, assume responsibilities and take risks, thereby both earning and commanding a better return than the idle, the indifferent, or the satisfied. The preferred stock is reserved for the dead, who started the business, carried it on according to their lights, left it a going concern, contributed labor and character, and, with these, bequeathed their example. So, when human experience is abandoned or forgotten, that moment the people still on earth must pay the penalty, in loss of credit, for mankind has then defaulted upon the dividend to the dead.

XXII.

In so far as this tendency is political there are few signs of its perversion or the shifting of its incidence. It is mainly an accretion of new powers, invoked and then lodged somewhere. In our early days, not being needed, they were not used, humanity proceeding, as in common with it, along the lines of least resistance. The feebleness of the Federal Government was due to the fact that there was little for it to do; and the functions of the States were simple because the people, thoroughly understanding each other, did for themselves what was to be done. But, as population changed in character and increased in numbers, it was found to be unamenable to discipline of so mild an order. Even then, the different centres of authority did not clash upon the exercise of this, that, or the other power. Like individuals, in similar situations, each did what lay at hand. If a dispute arose, the courts, standing

over all, commanding public approval and support, interposed with those Shall Nots—always so effective in regulating both peoples and individuals.

While, therefore, the people of a great State once entrusted their lives and property to local authority, the pillars of the popular temple have not been pulled down because, under new conditions, with new kinds of population to govern, with new forms of property to protect, they devise for themselves a State police body, uniformed, trained, and disciplined—thereby setting an example certain to find general imitation.

In the past, designing men, employing armed forces as instruments of their wills—fertile sources of power—have maintained personal rule for a time. Under their sway the State—though neither initiating nor creating—has become the dominant force. If, instead of repeating the dismal failures of its earlier history, democracy has achieved any success in later days, it has done so in just the measure that it has found and substituted masterful, intelligent leadership for the impulses of the dreamer, or the hesitation and inertia of the mob. If appeal is made anew to this quality, the present tendency will bring an accession of strength to the people and not to some personal tyranny: the most futile and fleeting of all forms of power.

From the beginning, each generation or age has aspired, struggled and achieved. Occasionally a stage is reached when, vaunting itself upon its contributions, it fondly thinks that it has added the word, *Finis*, to the annals of progress. Just as its pride seems overmastering, there comes a moment of quiet, when it stops, takes thought, and, looking about it, puts a measuring line upon its addition to the stock of ideas and action. Seeing how small this is, for a time it loses its conceit, regains its good sense, recalls its obligations, and again reverences the past.

As a people, we may well repeat this process.









